

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A caster ~~having~~ comprising:

first and second wheels disposed forward and back and an endless wrap-around member wrapped around the first and second wheels, the first and second wheels having common tangents C1 and C2, the common tangent C2 having an angle α with respect to a ground surface,

~~characterized in that wherein~~ the wraparound member ~~consists of~~ is a continuous endless belt formed by connecting a plurality of pieces continuous in the circumferential direction via a plurality of connecting members, the wraparound member having a linear portion A formed along at least the common tangent C2 of the wheels,

~~each piece being provided with an outer peripheral section and an inner peripheral section which are moveable independent of the adjacent pieces and permit the wraparound member to bend along the first and second wheels, and the outer peripheral section is adapted to contact the outer peripheral sections of the adjacent pieces when the wrap-around member is pushed inside the surface of rotation by an external force, thereby preventing the wrap-around member from being depressed inside the surface of rotation in excess of a predetermined amount~~

wherein each of the pieces is independently formed as a body having a connecting section that faces the adjacent pieces of either side thereof, a contacting section on an outer

peripheral side of the connecting section, and a guide wall on an inner peripheral side of the connecting section, and

when viewed in a side view which is a view in a direction of an axis of rotation of each of the wheels, each of the contacting sections is seen as a linear section that extends parallel to the contacting sections of the adjacent pieces, and that is perpendicular to the linear portion A of the common tangent C2 of the wheels,

wherein each of the guide walls on the inner peripheral side of the connecting members includes an inclined surface section,

the inclined surface section being adapted to form a groove that is substantially V-shaped between each of the adjacent pieces, thereby enabling the wraparound member to bend along an outer periphery of each of the first and second wheels, and

since the contacting sections of the adjacent pieces abut respectively against each other along the linear portion A, the linear portion A of the common tangent C2 is capable maintaining a linear condition and is prevented from being dented, so that even when the linear portion A is pushed by a force from an outside, the linear portion A is capable of serving as an anti-sticking plate,

wherein connecting portions are provided between the contacting section and the guide wall of each of the pieces, and

wherein the plurality of pieces are connected by the plurality of connecting members which extend, respectively, through the connecting portions provided in each of the pieces.

2. (Cancelled)

3. (Currently Amended) The caster according to claim 1, wherein each ~~piece is independently formed and connected to the others by a~~ of the connecting member in a members has a circular shape cross-section.

4. (Currently Amended) The caster according to claim 1, wherein each of the ~~piece~~ pieces is provided with a tire section on the outer peripheral side of the body and a wheel guide section into ~~which the~~ which outer peripheral sections of the first and second wheels are fitted.

5. (Original) The caster according to claim 4, wherein the tire section and the wheel guide section are respectively formed as separate bodies.

6. (Currently Amended) The caster according to claim 1, wherein the first and second wheels overlap each other when viewed ~~from the~~ from a direction perpendicular to the ground ~~surface of rotation.~~

7. (Original) The caster according to claim 1, wherein the first and second wheels

have different diameters and a plurality of wheels with a smaller diameter is provided in the direction of the axis of rotation.

8. (Currently Amended) The caster according to claim 1, wherein the ~~wrap-around~~ wraparound member is provided with a tire section on the outer peripheral side and a wheel guide section on the inner peripheral side, the tire section is formed ~~of a~~ as the continuous endless belt, and the wheel guide section is provided to engage ~~each~~ outer peripheral ~~section~~ sections of the first and second wheels and is combined with the tire section to form each of the ~~piece~~ pieces.

9. (Currently Amended) The caster according to claim 1, wherein the ~~wrap-around~~ wraparound member is provided with a tire section on the outer peripheral side and a wheel guide section on the inner peripheral side, the wheel guide section being provided to engage ~~each~~ outer peripheral ~~section~~ sections of the first and second wheels and formed ~~of a~~ as the continuous endless belt, and each of the ~~piece~~ pieces is formed by the tire section and the wheel guide section.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) The caster according to claim 1, wherein the first wheel is provided in such a manner ~~that the~~ a diameter thereof is 1/5 or less of that of the second wheel and its thickness is substantially the same as that of the second wheel, wherein the first wheel is disposed close ~~to the~~ to an outer periphery of the second wheel so that the first and second wheels are disposed on the same straight line when viewed from the direction of each thickness.

12. (Original) The caster according to claim 11, wherein a plurality of first wheels is provided along the outer periphery of the second wheel.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) The caster according to claim 1, wherein each of the pieces is provided with a plurality of protrusions on opposite sides thereof that project toward the adjacent piece on both sides thereof,

wherein each of the protrusions is provided with a through-hole that penetrates in the direction parallel to the axis of rotation,

wherein the protrusions of each piece overlap the protrusions of the adjacent pieces in the direction parallel to the axis of rotation of the wheels, in a manner such that the through-

holes in adjacent pieces are aligned, and

the connecting members are adapted to pass, respectively, through each of the through-holes in the overlapping protrusion, in order to connect the adjacent pieces together, thereby forming the continuous endless belt.

~~a joint piece provided with pipe sections on either end of the piece in the front and rear direction is provided and each pipe section is fitted into each depression formed on the pieces which are adjacent forward and back, thereby connecting each piece to the pipe sections by a single connecting shaft.~~

15. (Currently Amended) The caster according to claim 1, wherein ~~a connecting plate having the connecting portion is a pair of connecting holes is provided, each the connecting hole~~ holes in each of the pieces being caused to correspond to a through hole corresponding to and being aligned with the connecting holes formed on the central section of the adjacent piece in the front and rear direction, and a connecting shaft is

wherein the connecting members are adapted to be inserted into these the connecting holes and through hole, whereby in order to connect each of the piece pieces together is connected by such a single connecting shaft.

16. (New) The caster according to claim 1, wherein the connecting members extend in a direction perpendicular to the direction of the axis of rotation of each of the wheel.

17. (New) The caster according to claim 14, wherein the connecting members extend in a direction parallel to the direction of the axis of rotation of each of the wheel.